

# Journal of Family Strengths

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## Front Matter

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# FAMILY PRESERVATION JOURNAL

A Publication of the *Family Preservation Institute*

Volume 3 Issue 2 1998

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*Marianne Berry*

### **Intensive Family Preservation in Children's Mental Health: Predictors of Placement**

*Cathryn C. Potter*

### **An Innovative Family Preservation Program in an African American Community: Longitudinal Analysis**

*Patricia Ciliberti*

### **Chipping Away at the Monolith: Dispelling the Myth of Father Noninvolvement in Children's Early Literacy Development**

*Robert W. Ortiz*

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PLUS a review of current resources



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## SPECIAL FEATURES

Editorial

*Alvin L. Sallee*

v

## ARTICLES

**Getting to Know You: Psychoeducational Groups  
to Counter Social Isolation of Neglectful Mothers**

*Marianne Berry*

1

**Intensive Family Preservation in Children's Mental  
Health: Predictors of Placement**

*Cathryn C. Potter*

21

**An Innovative Family Preservation Program in an  
African American Community: Longitudinal Analysis**

*Patricia Ciliberti*

45

**Chipping Away at the Monolith: Dispelling the Myth of Father  
Noninvolvement in Children's Early Literacy Development**

*Robert W. Ortiz*

73



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The *Family Preservation Journal* is a refereed biannual publication. The *Journal* provides a forum for practitioners, administrators, researchers and educators to present and critically review programs, policy, practice methods, and research findings in the areas of family preservation and family support. The *Journal* is intended to positively impact the type and manner of services provided to families. Research and case studies from those delivering services are encouraged.

Manuscripts should conform to American Psychological Association style, with an optimal length of 18 pages, not to exceed 25 typed, double-spaced pages (excluding tables and figures), with an alphabetical list of references. Also include a diskette copy using WordPerfect v 5.1 or v 6.1 for PC.

Provide five copies of the manuscripts; the title page only should list the author's name, affiliation, address, and telephone number. The author's name must not appear after the title page; only the title should appear on the abstract and first page of the text. Include an abstract of about 100 words.

Please submit all materials to **Family Preservation Journal**, Department of Social Work, New Mexico State University, P.O. Box 30001 Dept. 3SW, Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001.

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## Editorial

### What Value Family?

Have you ever had to stay in a distant city over a Saturday night to get a cheaper airfare? Often, in Washington, D.C., I have been asked by Boards or the University to stay over Saturday night in order to save \$300 - \$500. Have you noticed that hotels charge less on the weekends, again sometimes requiring us to stay over the weekend? Have you noticed how holidays and vacations are not coordinated between schools, government, and businesses? Have you noticed how a number of social policies, from Temporary Assistance to Needy Families to the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997 focus on the individual and not the family unit? Little support is provided in our society to give families more time together.

During the recent election one could not escape the overwhelming rhetoric supporting family values in our society. The politicalization of families changed in the early 1970s when President Richard Nixon, a conservative, "captured" the family issue by declaring child care as anti-family. Family issues have remained prominent on the political landscape. What value do we really place on families in our society? The reality of U.S. policy and practice raises serious questions. Airlines place making money first inhibiting families from being together on the weekend. The new Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 focuses more on children and less on the family unit—more on artificial time lines and less on skills to keep families together. It is clear our society does not really value families. Fortunately, under ASFA, States will be funded at a higher level to provide Family Preservation Services, even though the name has been changed, bowing to political pressure.

The family concept in American society has run headlong into rugged individualism. It appears that until this basic philosophy is addressed and clarified, those of us in the Family Preservation business will be hard pressed to get policy makers and program directors to truly value families and provide family-centered practice. There are a number of preventative activities through education, child care, employment, benefits, support services, and funding that are critically needed.

The White House Conference on Children in 1909 stated, "Home life ... is the highest and finest product of civilization. It is the great molding force of mind and character. Children should not be deprived of it except for urgent and compelling reasons." If only we could match this mission with our policies and actions today.

The articles in this issue help expand our knowledge and approach to work with families. Dr. Berry's study of the use of groups to help mothers who have been neglectful and feel isolated speaks to the need for agencies and workers to support the goals of families in their social environment. Ways to structure access and design programs for Intensive Family Preservation in Children's Mental Health based on the predictors of placement is found in Dr.